

## Preservation at Community Colleges

**B**ecause of their mission to develop and implement a variety of courses and curricula in service to their localities, some community colleges have created certificate programs in historic preservation. Normally 24 credits, or one year, in length, these programs serve the needs of a variety of students, organizations, and employers.

In the mid-1990s, Northern Virginia Community College's Loudoun County Campus developed and implemented such a certificate, designed for persons seeking research, analytical, and field skills in historic preservation, archeology, and museum studies sufficient for transfer to any of several nearby baccalaureate programs, for engaging in what *Archaeology* magazine a few years ago identified as "the boom in volunteer archeology," or for immediate employment as a preservation or archeological para-professional.

The service area of the campus contains unique historic sites such as Oatlands (a National Trust property), Dodona Manor (George C. Marshall's home), and the Ball's Bluff National Cemetery. Additionally, Loudoun County is one of the nation's fastest growing localities, its economic development being spurred by Dulles Airport, a cluster of technology companies such as America Online, and extensive roadway and residential construction. It was critical for the county to renew its commitment to what W. Brown Morton calls the "autobiographical undertaking" of preservation.

A 1995 focus group of local politicians, preservation professionals, land developers, and NVCC faculty put together the basic structure of the certificate. Gateway courses are historical archeology and theory of historic preservation. Other courses include field techniques in archeology, survey of museum practice, collections management, and interpreting material culture. The capstone course is a supervised internship. Some courses from campus degree programs in interior

design (antiques, furniture history) and horticulture (historic gardens and plantings) may be included in the 24-credit graduation requirement. A highlight of fall 1998 course offerings will be "Historical Archaeology in the UK and the EC," with an instructor from the Avebury World Heritage site.

Students come from a diversity of backgrounds. Some are PhD candidates in history and American studies at local universities; others are docents at local sites and museums. The certificate is designed to meet the needs of such individuals, as well as traditional-age college students who are seeking skills which will allow them literally to put their hands on the past and gain immediate employment in the field. The first certificate graduates will complete their studies in time for spring 1998 ceremonies.

Invaluable to the NVCC undertaking was the model provided by Pennsylvania's Bucks County Community College, which has a thriving certificate program directed by Prof. Lyle Rosenberger. His students study not only in the unique environment of Bucks County, but regularly travel to and host speakers from Williamsburg, Virginia. Summer architectural study tours to England are offered annually. Rosenberger's program is sufficiently well regarded that it draws students not only from its locality, but from several adjacent states.

*Beverly Blois is Professor of History and Chair of the Humanities Division at Northern Virginia Community College's Loudoun Campus.*

For information about the NVCC historic preservation certificate, contact Beverly Blois or William Borgiasz, program director, at 703-450-2503 or <nvbloib@nv.cc.va.us>.

For information about the Bucks County program, contact Lyle Rosenberger at 215-968-8286.



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